

# Department of Human Services

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Published September 22, 2006

## Foster care worker not allowed to testify

Prosecutor argues unsuccessfully that witness is key in Lisa Holland case

### What's next

- Lisa Holland's murder trial continues today in Ingham County Circuit Court. Expected to testify are the driver of Ricky's special education bus, as well as the driver's assistant, and several Jackson Public Schools officials.

By Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

A witness Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency called "the core of my case" was not allowed to testify Thursday in Lisa Holland's murder trial.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield said Jackson County foster care worker Theresa Bronsberg's testimony - after defense attorneys objected to her taking the stand - would be irrelevant and redundant.

Lisa Holland is charged with murder and child abuse in the July 2005 death of her 7-year-old son Ricky Holland. Her husband, Tim Holland, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and is expected to testify against her.

Lisa Holland's co-counsel Andrew Abood on Thursday said the defense team wasn't afraid of what Bronsberg - who also is on their witness list - would say. But, he said, the trial needs to move forward.

"At some point, this trial should be about how Ricky died," Abood said, "not what happened three or four years before his death."

Bronsberg handled Ricky's case beginning in fall 2000 when the Hollands became his foster parents. She conducted monthly visits to their home in Jackson. The Hollands moved to Williamston in May 2005.

Abood said they would determine whether to call Bronsberg after the prosecution rests its case.

Ferency said he still might try to call Bronsberg as a witness, telling Manderfield the relevance would become more clear after the testimony of other witnesses. He has said Lisa Holland was exaggerating Ricky's medical and behavioral symptoms in order to receive more financial assistance from the state. Bronsberg's testimony, he said, would support that theory.

Also Thursday, an Ingham County sheriff's detective testified that nine days after Ricky was reported missing, blood evidence was found on some of the boy's clothing and in the Holland's Williamston home.

Detective Billy Mitchell said the owner of a company the Hollands hired to clean Ricky's room notified police about the discovery.

Bloodstains were found on the left sleeve of one of Ricky's shirts and around the collar.

Blood also was found on a pair of Ricky's white socks and on a baseboard outside of his room.

Lisa Holland told Mitchell the blood came from a nosebleed Ricky had two days before he was reported missing.

In his cross-examination of Mitchell, Lisa Holland's co-counsel Mike Nichols asked him if police knew whether Tim Holland killed Ricky.

"I don't know if Tim killed Ricky," Mitchell responded.

Also testifying Thursday was a Jackson psychologist who said he never suspected physical or emotional abuse during his evaluations of Ricky.

Dr. Jerel Del Dotto also told defense attorneys the relationship between Lisa and Ricky Holland was a normal one.

But Del Dotto did say Lisa Holland was reporting more severe behavior problems than what teachers had reported or what his own evaluations of Ricky had found.

Del Dotto said he had diagnosed Ricky with "disruptive behavior disorder."

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

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Published September 22, 2006

## Tim Skubick: Get ready for ads on crime

Tim Skubick  
Capitol Comment

Brace yourself for the October surprise: the Selepak and Holland TV ads. You just know they will hit the airwaves in this contentious race for governor.

Patrick Selepak was accidentally paroled when he should have been in the slammer. While out, he killed three people.

Ricky Holland was a foster child supposedly under the watchful eye of the Department of Human Services who was adopted by his foster family. He's dead, too.

Both of these tragedies happened on Gov. Jennifer Granholm's watch, which means she is fair game on what could have been done, if anything, to prevent them.

The governor had nothing directly to do with the deaths, but it was her Corrections Department that botched the release of Selepak. And the Child Protective Service workers who had been in the Holland home are part of her administration, as well.

Challenger Dick DeVos will say the buck stops at her desk.

Dragging tragedies into the race is nothing new.

Former Gov. Bill Milliken did not pour a fire retardant chemical into some cattle feed. But when somebody else did, the resulting PBB human contamination debacle was pinned on him by his Democratic opponent, Billy Fitzgerald.

Ex-Governor John Engler did not use a wire cutter to open a gapping hole in the fence surrounding a Detroit prison. But his opponent, Howard Wolpe, tried to pin the pin the escape of almost a dozen inmates on J.E.

So the fact that something went wrong during her tenure is not unique, but Granholm will be judged on how she handled each case.

And at least one Republican has already convicted her.

Acting as a staking horse for DeVos, House Speaker Craig DeRoche unloaded on the governor. He argues the Human Services and Corrections Departments are in crisis.

"I'm shocked and appalled at the administration's inability, because an election is going on, to address the lack of accountability and the mistakes that have been made for fear that it will affect the gubernatorial election," DeRoche complains.

House Minority Leader Dianne Byrum, who carries the water for the governor, bemoans any politicization of the deaths.

DeRoche pleads not guilty and hit the governor again.

"The governor can't blame Ricky Holland ... on John Engler and George Bush."

Regarding the Holland case, the administration has not disclosed what the CPS workers did or did not do. It says it can't because the courts have slapped a lid on the data.

As for the parole screw-up, some heads did roll, but the speaker hints the prison director should be next.

In a weird twist, the governor actually got some cover from an ultra-conservative Republican who came to the defense of Corrections head Patricia Caruso.

The guy who rides herd on the department budget contends, "There is no crisis." This leaves Sen. Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt, in complete disagreement with the GOP speaker.

Betting money suggests that DeVos will ignore Cropsey. But DeVos should be cautious. If he overplays his hand, his opponent will charge him with exploiting those deaths.

Once again, it will be up to you to decide if any blame should be assessed.

What do you think? Tim Skubick is a local television correspondent who writes a column for the State Journal on Fridays. Write him c/o Lansing State Journal, 120 E. Lenawee St., Lansing, MI 48919.

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## Mom jailed for letting criminal watch child

Friday, September 22, 2006

By Scott Hagen

shagen@citpat.com -- 768-4929

A mother who let a convicted sex offender babysit her 5-year-old daughter -- who later accused him of rape -- will spend more than a month in jail.

Circuit Judge Edward Grant sentenced Margaret Mary Anderson to 42 days in jail on Thursday after she pleaded guilty this summer to attempted second-degree child abuse.

Prosecutors say allowing a sex offender to spend time with her daughter was worthy of the charge, usually reserved for people who beat their kids.

"He told me he had been in prison for drugs," Anderson said in court Thursday. "Then he told me it was for sex with a 16-year-old girl."

Assistant Prosecutor Allison Bates, however, said Anderson told police she knew Timothy Watson was a sex offender from the first day he moved into her home on Lansing Avenue.

Watson actually had been in prison for sexually assaulting a 9-year-old girl.

Anderson allowed Watson, 47, to take her daughter to McDonald's and buy her Barbie dolls.

Not a good idea, Grant said.

"It's extremely dangerous to have a male babysitting a female child," Grant said.

It's even worse when the male babysitter has been to prison, Grant said, adding that a victim statement from family members indicates the little girl is still struggling with the pain of the assault.

Watson pleaded guilty in May to assault with intent to commit sexual penetration.

Anderson will go to jail and loses parenting rights to her daughter.

If she cooperates with her probation terms, including community service, she will avoid 220 more days in jail.

"I think it's a reasonable sentence," said defense attorney David Lady.

"She knew he had been to prison, but didn't know it involved a minor child."

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# THE BAY CITY TIMES

## Pony League umpire charged with computer sex crimes

Friday, September 22, 2006

By **TIM YOUNKMAN**

**TIMES WRITER**

A 46-year-old Bay City man who has worked as an umpire for boys baseball games has been charged with computer crimes involving sexual abuse of children, Bay County Prosecutor Kurt C. Asbury announced Thursday.

Franklin F. Rivette, of 407 N. Barclay St., has demanded examination in Bay County District Court on the felony charges and was released on \$25,000 bond pending a hearing on the evidence before District Judge Timothy Kelly.

Asbury said Rivette, who works for a tire company in Saginaw, is charged with using computers to commit a crime, distributing child sexually abusive activity, possession of child sexually abusive material and accosting children for immoral purposes.

If convicted, Rivette faces a maximum penalty of seven years in prison, Asbury said. Rivette was charged following an investigation by the FBI's computer crime unit stemming from a complaint filed with the Bay City Police.

Defense attorney Robert Dunn said the charges make it appear that Rivette had some personal, physical and sexual contact with an underage person, but that isn't true.

"He has a fascination with online sexual material and this is treatable," Dunn said. "He is in counseling for this and has been even before his arrest."

Dunn said Rivette had a MySpace online account and had online contact with other people.

"I'm not sure of the sequence of events, but at one point he was contacted by an undercover policeman in New Hampshire," Dunn said.

He said that authorities have said Rivette wanted the person - who he thought was an underage boy - to come to Bay City.

"Actually, it was the other way around," Dunn said. "The undercover police officer tried to get him to go there."

The online incidents involved viewing pictures and conversation, Dunn said. Asbury said the conversation included the possibility of sexual contact.

The undercover police officer in New Hampshire contacted Bay City Police and the FBI for assistance in the investigation.

Asbury had reported that Rivette will face a hearing on the evidence Thursday but Dunn said that date will be pushed back at least until October.

Bay County Pony League officials said they had not been contacted by authorities about Rivette, who was an umpire as recently as the local Pony League championship games. League officials said there have been no complaints against him in connection with his work as an umpire.

Asbury said the FBI was involved because it has a unit trained in computer crime detection and helps

gather evidence for local authorities.

"Our main concern here is to make sure people are prosecuted for these types of crimes," Asbury said.  
"We want people to get the message ... that there are real predators out there."

- Tim Younkman covers area police agencies and courts for The Times. He can be contacted at 894-9652,  
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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### 2 to be suspended over bus mistake

Autistic student left at wrong house

Friday, September 22, 2006

**BY LEANNE SMITH**

**News Staff Reporter**

A bus driver and assistant will serve a three-day suspension without pay following an incident in which a Livingston Educational Service Agency special education student was dropped off at the wrong house.

The two will be suspended different days so someone on the bus is familiar with the students riding it, said LESA Superintendent Sally Vaughn.

The disciplinary action follows a Sept. 7 incident in which 6-year-old Samuel Jann was dropped off at the wrong house a few blocks away from his Howell home. Samuel is autistic and nonverbal, so he could not alert the driver of the mistake, and the parent he was dropped off with didn't immediately recognize he had the wrong student, Vaughn said.

Although the child was delivered to his mother, Pam Jann, within 10 minutes, the mix-up was upsetting to everyone, Vaughn said.

"This is something that just should not have occurred," she said.

LESA buses travel throughout Livingston County and deliver students to all five county school districts and LESA's Howell campus. Students going home from school are not dropped off at group stops. They are left at their homes or at a pre-determined location, such as a day-care center.

LESA's students do have name tags on their backpacks, but a committee of administrators, transportation staff and possibly parents will meet next week to look at better ways of making sure each one is more clearly identifiable, Vaughn said.

"We have good procedures in place, but we need to look at improving them," she said. "We need to double-check our system so something like this never happens again."

In her five years at LESA's helm, nothing like this has ever happened, Vaughn said. The bus driver and assistant could protest the suspension, but Vaughn said earlier this week that no formal grievance had been filed.

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## Mom declined help days before Rose's death

**FLINT**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Thursday, September 21, 2006

**By Ron Fonger**

**rfonger@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6317**

FLINT - Nineteen days before 5-year-old Rose Kelley died in a home so filthy it shocked police, her parents turned down an offer to help them control lice and make their home more sanitary, according to an amended family court petition.

Michelle L. Bowen, Rose Kelley's mother, told a caseworker at Washington Elementary School that the family was "doing pretty good and that they did not need any help," according to the petition from the Genesee Circuit Court.

Caseworkers and police have said Rose Kelley died in squalor in her east side rental home, her hair severely infested with lice, and the "overwhelming stench of stale air, urine and dog feces" inside.

Prosecutors filed the amended complaint this week as they prepared for an Oct. 25 trial aimed at terminating the parental rights of Bowen and Jeffrey C. Kelley.

Rose Kelley's older sister attended Washington Elementary, where the state Department of Human Services has a family resource center with caseworkers offering parents help with such services as cash and food assistance.

The amended court petition says a caseworker offered help in a face-to-face meeting in her office on May 16, 19 days before Rose Kelley died, and was told by Bowen that she would ask for help if she and Kelley couldn't take care of things themselves.

"Michelle Bowen said that both she and Jeffrey were 'working on the problem(s),' " the petition says.

DHS has said in court filings that it previously had been in contact with the family because of medical neglect and chronic head lice.

Officials said Wednesday they could not comment on dealings with a specific family but confirmed Washington has one of 46 family resource centers in Michigan.

Karen Stock, director of DHS' office of communications, said in an e-mail to The Flint Journal that she could not comment on conversations DHS workers may have had with the Bowen-Kelley family.

Kraig Sippell, an attorney representing Bowen in the termination hearing, said he hadn't yet spoken to his client about the new petition filed by the Genesee County prosecutor's office.

"I don't believe the alleged conditions of the home led to this medical condition," Sippell said. "These people didn't do anything to intentionally" harm their daughter.

The Oakland County medical examiner has ruled Rose Kelley's death a homicide and said she died from liver failure compounded by neglect.

Police have said Bowen told them she knew her daughter was sick for days but never took her to a doctor, fearing her children would be taken from her because of lice infestation.

Three other children in the Bowen-Kelley home have been removed by Probate Judge Robert E. Weiss. The Oct. 25 trial is scheduled to determine whether the unmarried couple should have their parental rights terminated.

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# Judge rules foster care worker can't testify in murder trial

AP

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Lansing - A judge ruled that a woman described as a key prosecution witness could not testify in the trial of a woman accused of killing her seven-year-old adopted son.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield ruled today that Jackson County foster care worker Theresa Bronsberg's testimony would be irrelevant and redundant.

However, Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency says Bronsberg is "the core" of his case.

He says her testimony would prove Lisa Holland allegedly used her son, Ricky, for financial gain. Ferency says he might still try to call Bronsberg as a witness.

Lisa Holland of Williamston is charged with felony murder and child abuse in Ricky's death. Her husband, Tim Holland, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

Lisa Holland faces life in prison if convicted.

Web Editor: [Chris Fleszar](#), Managing Editor

Web Editor: [Matt Campbell](#), Producer

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## Judge rules foster care worker can't testify in murder trial

LANSING, Mich. -- A judge ruled that a woman described as a key prosecution witness could not testify in the trial of a woman accused of killing her 7-year-old adopted son.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield ruled Thursday that Jackson County foster care worker Theresa Bronsberg's testimony would be irrelevant and redundant.

Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency called Bronsberg "the core" of his case, saying her testimony would prove Lisa Holland allegedly used her son, Ricky, for financial gain, the Lansing State Journal reported.

Ferency said he might still try to call Bronsberg as a witness.

Lisa Holland, 34, of Williamston is charged with felony murder and child abuse in Ricky's death. Her husband, Tim Holland, 37, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

Lisa Holland faces life in prison if convicted.

Ricky vanished from his home in July 2005. His adoptive parents said he had run away. In January, Tim Holland led authorities to Ricky's body after telling them his wife struck the boy in the head with a hammer. Tim Holland said he only helped dispose of the body.

Lisa Holland has said her husband killed Ricky.

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Article published Sep 21, 2006

## Internet can be wonderful, but children are vulnerable

"Whatever happened to don't talk to strangers?" Redford 17th District Court Judge Karen Khalil posed that question to Detective Wade Higgason of the Michigan State Police Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and Keith Clark, assistant prosecuting attorney for the Wayne County Prosecutor's Child Abuse Unit. Judges Khalil and Charlotte Wirth invited Higgason, Clark and *Observer* community life reporter Linda Chomin on Sept. 11 to talk about the dangers of the Internet to children to members of the local clergy and educational community.

As Higgason and Clark told the assembled group, strangers can now come into your home and work their way into the confidence of vulnerable children looking for love and acceptance in all the wrong places.

Every new technology has presented a challenge for parents. For every positive the technology offers, there is also a negative.

Movies brought the world to the neighborhood theater. The finest dramas, funniest comedies and travelogues from every corner of the globe seemed to shrink a once vast world. But they also presented disturbing images, radical ideas and general naughtiness that was once a lot harder to find.

The radio was another technological wonder. The voice of the president could now reassure and rally a weary nation. The finest music from everywhere could be had free for the simple inconvenience of listening to a sponsor's pitch.

But the radio also brought sounds that made some people uncomfortable.

Perhaps the biggest intruder was the television. This wonder of sight and sound seemed to have a hypnotic effect on children. If not monitored properly, children were likely to become too enthralled in the television (TV zombies) and less interested in outdoor activities, schoolwork and family life.

It has been blamed, with some justification, on increased obesity in children, increased attention deficit and a decline in reading.

Computers first made their inroads on children with video games. But now the technology has advanced exponentially with iPods and Blackberrys and phones that do everything but think for you.

Then there's the Internet.

The crucial difference between the Internet and television is that the Internet is a two-way street. And unlike the telephone, it can mask the person on the other end of a chat room or instant messaging conversation. And as Higgason and Clark made clear, predators have become extremely adept at manipulating information so they can tailor their come-ons to teenagers and younger children and they can find those children.

MySpace.com is usually the Web site that draws the most attention as being a potential danger for teenagers. The site itself began benignly enough as a way for people with common interests in music to hook up to discuss their passion. It grew as a way for young people to connect with each other across the street or around the world.

It has, like all those earlier inventions, an enormous potential for opening positive communications (despite its commercial, profit goals). But when young people (some of them technically too young to be using the service) begin giving out too much personal information, it opens the doors to predators. It also opens the door to youthful indiscretions that can cause problems for teenagers too eager to share their binges or sexual escapades (real or imagined).

Higgason and Clark are the experts and they say the same thing, the same thing that could have been said to parents about all those earlier inventions and their impact on children -- know your child.

"Know what they're doing online," Higgason said. "Understand what they're doing online. Educate yourself on the Internet."

There are practical tips about limiting a child's time online, keeping your computer in a common area (no bedroom computers) and monitoring what they do on the computer.

It's often a shock to parents -- it was to me -- when the child who once screamed at you, "You don't understand. You're too strict," grows up to be an adult and says, sadly, "You just didn't get it, you didn't know, you weren't strict enough."

Since you can't win anyway, protect your children.

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# ClickOnDetroit.com

## Police: Toddler Critical From Head Trauma

### *Child Was In Foster Care*

POSTED: 11:12 am EDT September 22, 2006

A 2-year-old girl is in critical condition after, police said, she experienced head trauma while in foster care.

Canton police responded to the 2600 block of Emily Court and found the toddler unresponsive, according to a Canton police news release.

The girl was taken to Annapolis Hospital before being taken to University of Michigan Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor.

Officials said the girl shows signs of head trauma and is listed in critical condition.

The child was in child foster care and with her foster mother when police received the call. Canton police are investigating.

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Article published Sep 22, 2006

## **Man gets five years in severed arm case**

Sitting in a wheelchair, Brenda Humphrey told a Monroe County judge Thursday that because of her husband's criminal and abusive actions, she can no longer give her children a bear hug or teach them such simple tasks as tying their shoelaces.

With her husband standing nearby in jail clothes, Mrs. Humphrey told Circuit Judge Michael W. LaBeau that since she lost her arm that night in July, her life has turned upside down.

"In one tragic evening, my life changed forever," she said. "I have lost my husband, my home, my job and, most importantly of all, my arm."

Stephen Humphrey, 39, was sentenced to a maximum of five years in prison for dragging his wife along a rural Milan Township road. Her arm, which apparently was tangled with the seat belt, was severed between the shoulder and elbow.

The five-year maximum was a punishment that Judge LaBeau said was too light for what he called extreme brutality.

"Five years in this case is far too low," the judge said before imposing the sentence. "For him to do this to his wife is unbelievable."

Despite the severity of the case and Mr. Humphrey's history of four previous drunken driving convictions, the sentencing guidelines were set at 1½ to three years in prison. Judge LaBeau exceeded those guidelines and sentenced him to serve three to five years, the maximum allowed by law.

The defendant's attorney, Telford Elders of Monroe, said the guidelines should have been 14 months to about 2½ years. But Monroe County Assistant Prosecutor Anne McCarthy argued successfully that Mr. Humphrey deserved to spend as much time in prison as possible.

Ms. McCarthy said that on the night of incident, the couple argued and Mr. Humphrey ordered his wife out of the pickup truck. When she reached inside to grab her cell phone, he accelerated while dragging her along.

Ms. McCarthy said Mrs. Humphrey yelled repeatedly for him to stop. But then the tires of the truck ran up her leg while her arm was still tangled. She felt it being torn off. While laying on the ground bleeding and screaming in agony, Mr. Humphrey covered her mouth

to suppress her cries.

"He was more afraid of getting caught for drunk driving than saving her arm," Ms. McCarthy told the judge. "I can't think of anything more horrific."

Instead of calling for help or running to a nearby house, Mr. Humphrey decided to take his severely injured wife to hospital in the pickup. The arm never was located.

"You can't imagine anything more cruel," Ms. McCarthy said. "For what this man did to his wife that day, the maximum is not enough."

Mr. Humphrey earlier pleaded no contest to charges of driving with a suspended license while causing serious injury and driving while under the influence of alcohol. Both carry a maximum of five years in prison. A no-contest plea means a defendant does not have to admit guilt, but the courts treat it as a guilty plea.

While Mr. Humphrey is sent away to prison, his wife will continue her recovery at her parents' home in Jackson County.

She told the judge that she believed Mr. Humphrey was her husband for life but he had a bad drinking problem.

"I asked him several times to stop drinking or our marriage would end in divorce," Mrs. Humphrey said. "I thought I met my knight in shining armor."

Before sentencing him, Judge LaBeau asked Mr. Humphrey if he had anything to say. He declined.

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## Muskegon Chronicle

### Estranged husband guns down wife's boyfriend; kills himself

Friday, September 22, 2006

By Ken Kolker

#### CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

The woman hid in her bathroom, not knowing whether her boyfriend was dead outside, whether her shotgun-toting estranged husband was trying to get in or whether her children were safe in their beds.

"My husband's shooting my boyfriend," Tammara Alexander whispered by phone to the Montcalm County dispatcher just after midnight Thursday -- the beginning of a half-hour of terror captured on audio tape.

"What's going on there?" the dispatcher asked.

"Oh, my husband just shot my boyfriend."

While talking on the phone with the dispatcher, the 26-year-old woman also read text messages sent to her cell phone from her husband's cell phone:

"Make sure to tell the boys that their Daddy loves them," one of the text messages said.

Not until more than 30 minutes later, did she learn that her boyfriend, Kevin Robert Johnston, 34, was dead outside and that her husband, Gregory S. Alexander, 36, of Ionia, had shot and killed himself in a nearby field.

Deputies said Alexander lay in wait in the dark outside Johnston's home at 4348 E. Condensery Road, east of Sheridan, and shot Johnston repeatedly as he walked to the front door.

The woman told police she heard four shots. Four green shotgun shells were still at the scene the next morning, near the front steps.

She said she heard the single suicide shot over the phone while she was talking with her husband on his cell phone, Montcalm County sheriff's deputies said.

Deputies said they also heard the final shot. They found the husband's body outside his vehicle on a two-track road about a half-mile from the victim's home.

Deputies reunited the woman with her sons, ages 3 and 6, who apparently slept through the ordeal.

"Oh, God, thank you," she can be heard on the 911 tape, thanking deputies.

Tammara and Gregory Alexander married in November 1999 and had two children. They separated in July, and he filed for divorce in late August.

About the same time, she obtained a personal protection order to keep her estranged husband away, claiming he had made "a suicide threat and a threat to take my children if I ever left him," court records show.

"He has had drug problems and has mentally and verbally abused myself and my children," she wrote in the request for protection.

However, the husband filed a request to terminate the protection order, saying he had never harassed,

threatened or intimidated her or the children, court records show. That request was pending.

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### More schools required to offer breakfast

Requirement kicks in when fifth of students are eligible for free or reduced lunches

Friday, September 22, 2006

**BY LEANNE SMITH**

**News Staff Reporter**

Four Livingston County schools have been added to the ranks of state schools required to serve breakfast.

Fowlerville's Kreeger Elementary School and Munn Middle School, Howell's Southwest Elementary School and Pinckney's Hamburg Elementary School have at least 20 percent of their students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, according to the Michigan Department of Education. By state law, schools that reach this mark must offer the federal school breakfast program.

They join Fowlerville's H.T. Smith Elementary School, the only county school that met this requirement last year. Local school officials agree this year's new additions are a sign that Michigan's suffering economy is catching up to Livingston County.

"Plants that our parents work at are closing and people are losing their jobs," said Sharon Martin, Fowlerville Community Schools' food service director. "The great thing is that we have this service we can offer to help our families out."

Serving breakfast is nothing new to Fowlerville or Howell, which offer the meal in all their schools regardless of mandated numbers.

"Both parents are rushing off to work these days, and some kids are just not ready to eat when they first wake up, or they eat better if they eat with their friends," Martin said.

Fowlerville charges \$1.40 for all breakfasts, while Howell charges \$1.40 at its elementary schools and \$1.50 at its secondary schools. Students qualifying for free meals do not pay anything, while those meeting reduced-price guidelines pay 30 cents.

All school breakfasts are reimbursed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food and nutrition service. This year, it pays \$1.31 per free breakfast, \$1.01 per reduced-price breakfast and 24 cents per paid breakfast served.

Brighton and Hartland are not mandated to serve breakfast in any of their schools, but full breakfast is offered at Brighton High School for \$2 and a la carte foods are served at both Brighton and Hartland high schools.

Pinckney also has a-la-carte breakfast items at its high school, but this is the first time the district has been mandated to offer a breakfast program, said Linda Moskalik, assistant superintendent for finance and operations. Hamburg Elementary's program begins Oct. 2, she said.

This year's percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunches are based on applications turned in by families last October. Next year's list will be based on applications currently coming in at local districts. The numbers are up in every district.

The MDE encourages all families who think they may qualify for free or reduced-price school meals to complete applications and turn them in to their schools as soon as possible, said Barbara Campbell, supervisor of school nutrition training and programs.

"It's completely anonymous," she said. "Students participating in the program are not singled out or treated any differently than any other student in the cafeteria."

The federal school breakfast program started 40 years ago in schools located in lower economic areas and in areas where children had to travel a long way to school. It was opened up to all schools 31 years ago.

Michigan schools are required to host a public hearing prior to the start of each school year to gain input on whether or not parents want a breakfast program in non-mandated schools. Officials in Pinckney, Brighton and Hartland said they have not offered district-wide breakfast programs because they have not received a lot of requests to do so.

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Food for thought

Friday, September 22, 2006

The federally assisted school breakfast program began as a pilot project in 1966, and was made permanent in 1975.

- During the 2004-05 school year, 9.2 million children in more than 80,000 schools and childcare facilities participated in the School Breakfast Program every day. About 82 percent received free or reduced-price breakfasts.
- Twenty-seven states, including Michigan, mandate breakfast programs for schools that have a certain percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunches. In Michigan, the number is 20 percent.
- Other Livingston County schools nearing the 20-percent mandate, based on October 2005 figures, are: Fowlerville High (16.8), Fowlerville Junior High (17) and Howell's Northwest Elementary (18.5), Challenger Elementary (18.5), Highlander Way Middle School (17.5), Latson Road Elementary (16.9) and Southeast Elementary (15.7).
- Find out more on the Web at [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd), [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org), or [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde).

Sources: Food Research & Action Center, Washington, D.C., and Michigan Department of Education.

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September 21, 2006

## **SEASONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES DROP IN ALL AREAS**

Numbers released by the Department of Labor and Economic Growth on Thursday showed August's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate had dropped in all of the 17 major labor markets in the state.

"As is typical, August jobless rates dropped seasonally throughout Michigan," Rick Waclawek, director of the Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives said. "In many regions, unemployment fell due to recalls in the auto industry from temporary layoffs that happened during the July retooling period. At the same time, some workers began leaving the state's work force as summer and seasonal employment began to wind down in August."

During the period from July to August, regional jobless rates decreased between .3 to 1.7 percent, with the largest drops occurring in Monroe, Flint, and Saginaw-Saginaw Township North Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

From August 2005 to August 2006, the unemployment rate has increased in 16 of the markets, with an average increased rate of .8 percent. The largest spikes occurred in Flint and the northeast lower peninsula region.

Unemployment in Detroit-Warren-Livonia has remained unchanged during that time at 7 percent.

From July to August of this year, total employment levels were mixed with 10 regions seeing a decline. The seven regions with gains were Saginaw-Saginaw Township North, Monroe, Kalamazoo-Portage, and Detroit-Warren-Livonia.

Seasonally unadjusted payroll jobs in the state rose in August by 34,000 to total 4,335,000 and throughout the month, all metropolitan areas in the state registered seasonal payroll employment increases. The most notable gains were made in the professional and business services sector.

From August 2005 to August 2006, payroll jobs have dropped by 16,000, according to the report.

In terms of counties, Mackinac County claimed the lowest unemployment rate for August at 3.2 percent, while Montcalm County came in last at 13 percent.





## State program boosts student scores

### FLINT

#### THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, September 22, 2006

By Melissa Burden

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FLINT - A two-year program that decreased student mobility - the rate at which students switch schools - and improved test scores in two Flint School District classrooms will continue, a state Department of Human Services official said Thursday.

Sheryl Thompson, DHS director for Genesee County, said the Genesee Scholars program will resume in two second-grade classrooms this year and third-grade classroom next school year at Washington and Bryant elementary schools.

"We're going to start as soon as possible, as soon as we can get everything together," Thompson said after a news conference at Washington.

Genesee Scholars, which ran from the fall 2004 through the end of this past school year, gave parents of about 50 students a \$100 monthly rent/mortgage subsidy to stay in the same residence for two years, and paired students with the same teacher and classmates for two years.

The mobility rate of students taking part in the program fell to 20 percent from the 76 percent schoolwide rate at Washington and 60 percent rate at Bryant before the program started, said Marianne Udow, state DHS director.

"What a dramatic improvement," she said. "The MEAP scores also improved."

Genesee Scholars students also posted higher standardized and reading test scores than their peers in the same schools.

"It has proven results," Udow said. "The investment of that \$100 ... more than pays back."

Bryant Principal Grant Whitehead said attendance of students in the program also improved and was better than their peers'.

Becky Drinkwine, 46, said her son Noah, 10, improved academically and socially by being with the same students and teachers for two years.

"He opened up a lot," she said.

Now a fourth-grader at Washington, Noah feels comfortable approaching other children to play, Drinkwine said.

"If I'd go to McDonald's or something he wouldn't want to play with the other kids (before)," she said.

Noah was among 21 of 25 students at Washington to finish the program, and 24 of

#### QUICK TAKE

Here are results of programs with about 50 students at two Flint schools that ran the past two school years.

- **MOBILITY:**  
Scholars students had a 20 percent mobility rate - the number of students switching schools - compared to a 76 percent schoolwide rate before the program at Washington Elementary School and a 60 percent rate at Bryant Elementary School.

- **TEST SCORES:**  
Scholars students scored better on the 2005-06 Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests than other Flint schools students in their grade. Scores in reading for program students showed 88 percent passed compared to 59 percent of other students, 48 percent passed writing compared to 34 percent of other students and 80 percent passed math compared to 60 percent of others.

Source: Michigan

25 students at Bryant did, officials said. Washington Principal Maria Hope said the vast majority of Washington's Genesee Scholars students returned to the school this fall.

Department of  
Human Services

The program is a partnership of parents, the Flint School District, local landlords and DHS. A grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority paid for the subsidies.

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## Durant-Tuuri-Mott wins national award

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

### FLINT

#### THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, September 20, 2006

By Laura Misjak

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FLINT - Representatives from the U.S. Department of Education went to Durant-Tuuri-Mott Elementary School in Flint Tuesday to congratulate students and staff on winning a prestigious national award.

The Flint school is the only school in Michigan chosen for the U.S. Secretary of Education's Back to School Initiative for being close to achieving the goals of the federal No Child Left Behind.

"We didn't know this was coming," said school Principal Dan Berezny. "A letter was sent to our executive director that our school was chosen."

Berezny said according to MEAP statistics, 75 percent of the school's fourth-graders were proficient in reading. The school's students are diverse, some physically challenged, hearing impaired or visually impaired.

"It's an honor to be recognized at a national level," Berezny said.

The federal officials, Todd Zoellick and Kristine Cohn, attended a school assembly and participated in class events throughout the day.

"What you learn, you keep forever," Cohn told students in the crowded school auditorium. "We are here because you are the coolest people in the entire state of Michigan, because you work so hard and because you love to read."

- Laura Misjak

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This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**  
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September 22, 2006

## Pupil, 9, charged in teacher attack

Fourth-grader cursed and punched his teacher at Magahay Elementary, Sterling Hts. police say.

**Edward L. Cardenas / The Detroit News**

**STERLING HEIGHTS** -- Assault and battery charges were issued Thursday against a 9-year-old Sterling Heights fourth-grader who police say attacked his teacher in school.

The Magahay Elementary School student allegedly launched into the profanity-laced assault after being told to be quiet in the hallway on Sept. 12. He is alleged to have hit the female teacher in the face and stomach.

He was charged for the attack at the school near Hall Road and Van Dyke.

"It was a violent assault. This wasn't a child having a temper tantrum," said Eric Smith, Macomb County prosecutor. "Our goal is not to incarcerate the child, but to get a court jurisdiction so the court can provide some guidance and counseling before it is too late."

The Prosecutor's Office has charged the boy with one count of assault and battery.

A pretrial date in juvenile court has not been set. Officials would not release the name of the teacher.

The student, whose name is not being released, has been suspended, according to Smith. Further information about the child's status could not be released, said Hildy Corbett, director of school and community relations.

"We never comment on individual children," she said.

According to Smith, the student has a history of violence and school disruption. During the Sept. 12 incident, he allegedly was causing a disruption, and his teacher approached him. When she got close to him, he went on a vulgarity-filled rant, striking the 34-year-old teacher several times in the head and stomach before other children were able to subdue the child.

The teacher was not seriously injured, Smith said.

"She wanted to file a report," Smith said. "This student has a history and at some point the school was at its wits' end."

According to a study released by the U.S. Department of Education, teachers were the victims of about 183,000 nonfatal crimes at school between 1999 and 2003.

According to the Utica Community Schools handbook, students who have reached the sixth grade or above who commit a physical assault against a school district employee in a district building can be permanently expelled from school and referred to police.

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## **MI Catholic Conference Hails New State Earned Income Tax Credit; Anti-Poverty Measure Is 'Best Piece of Legislation Passed This Year'**

9/22/2006 1:29:00 PM

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To: State Desk, Religion Reporter

Contact: Paul A. Long of Michigan Catholic Conference, 517-648-1076 (cell), or  
[plong@micatholicconference.org](mailto:plong@micatholicconference.org)

LANSING, Mich., Sept. 22 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Creating a state Earned Income Tax Credit that piggybacks the federal credit will prove to be the best piece of legislation passed by the state this year, the Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) stated today as the governor enacted Senate Bill 453. The conference sites the tax credit's ability to bring financial relief to low-income working families who pay high marginal tax rates.

"The enactment of this legislation is an affirmation that the state can work in a bipartisan fashion to address the serious role that poverty plays in the life of Michigan residents," says Michigan Catholic Conference Vice President for Public Policy Paul A. Long. "If is my belief that Senate Bill 453 will prove to be the best piece of legislation passed this year by the State of Michigan."

Senate Bill 453 amends the Income Tax Act to allow taxpayers who qualify for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, beginning after Dec. 31, 2007, to claim a state credit worth 10 percent of the federal credit. Beginning Dec. 31, 2008 and beyond, the taxpayer will be eligible to claim an additional 10 percent of the federal credit, making the final state Earned Income Tax Credit worth a total of 20 percent of the federal credit. In the 2004 tax year, 662,912 Michigan federal tax returns claimed \$1.17 million in credits.

Established in 1975, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit provides a refundable credit to low-income individuals and families to offset the burden of Social Security taxes, provide an incentive to make the transition from welfare to work, and to supplement earnings. The credit is equal to a percentage of the taxpayer's earned income based on the number of children in the household, up to a certain amount annually adjusted for inflation. According to its supporters, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit lifts more children out of poverty than any other federal program.

Senate Bill 453, sponsored by Senator Nancy Cassis (R-Nov), was enacted today after both the Michigan Senate and the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the bill in a bipartisan fashion. SB 453 cleared the Senate 38-0 and the House of Representatives 103-3. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 19 other states and the District of Columbia have Earned Income Tax Credits. Four of those states: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia, also have credits that are worth 20 percent of the federal credit, while another five states have credits higher than that amount.

For a Michigan family with two children and 37,000 in earned income, the value of Michigan's Earned Income Tax Credit, if applicable for this year, would be approximately \$880.

The legislation was signed into law today at the New Jerusalem Community Center in Flint, Mich. as Gov. Granholm was joined by Senate Minority Leader Bob Emerson (D-Flint), who has advocated for the legislation for some 20 years, and MCC Vice President for Public Policy Paul Long.

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Michigan Catholic Conference is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in the state.

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September 22, 2006

**Letter**

## Help welfare families thrive without time limits

The Aug. 25 editorial "Let's end traditional welfare in Michigan" assumes that welfare recipients who have accumulated a certain number of months on assistance are not serious about "overcoming personal problems" and getting a job. The data shows otherwise.

Some "personal problems" -- cognitive or learning disabilities, mental illness or physical disabilities -- may never be fully overcome, despite serious efforts. Forty percent of parents on assistance are deferred from work participation because they prove they are disabled, care for a disabled family member or experience domestic violence.

Other "problems" include job skill deficits that can only be overcome by education and training. But 1.7 percent of Michigan's welfare parents have been assigned to educational activities. Until recently, Michigan's "work first" policies meant "take a job, any job." Parents never acquired the skills to find and keep good, stable jobs. As a result, families experienced repeated joblessness and were recycled back onto welfare.

Virtually all states -- not just Michigan -- will be unable to meet the 50 percent federal work participation standard starting Oct. 1. But states nearest the target (for example, Illinois) aggressively assign parents to education and training that leads to stable, higher-paying jobs. Michigan, by contrast, ranks 42nd in assigning parents to education and training.

Skills development, not time limits, is the key for Michigan's success. The Engler administration showed that families without significant barriers could move off assistance through a "social contract" that required parents to participate in work activities to receive benefits.

By assigning parents to education and training, Michigan can meet its work participation rates in the coming year and keep families from returning to welfare -- without time limits.

*Terri Winegarden*

*Staff Attorney*

*Center for Civil Justice*

*Saginaw*

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